

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
2nd Session

Vote No. 269

September 5, 1996, 10:00 am
Page S-9874 Temp. Record

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS/Conference, Passage

SUBJECT: Conference report to accompany the Military Construction Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1997 . . .
H.R. 3517. Agreeing to the conference report.

ACTION: CONFERENCE REPORT AGREED TO, 92-6

SYNOPSIS: The conference report to accompany H.R. 3517, the Military Construction Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1997, will appropriate \$9.982 billion for military construction, family housing, and base realignment and closure for the Department of Defense. This amount is \$850 million more than requested and \$1.2 billion less than the amount appropriated for FY 1996. Details include the following:

- military construction: \$3.187 billion, including \$413.9 million for the National Guard and Reserves (the Administration requested only \$194.1 million; it requested cutting funding for the Army National Guard to \$7.6 million from last year's level of \$137.1 million; total funding for the Guard and Reserves last year was \$429.9 million);
- military family housing: \$4.116 billion (\$258 million more than requested); and
- Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC): \$2.507 billion.

Those favoring passage contended:

This conference report for military construction projects is within its budget allocations for budget authority and outlays, is equal to the amount that will be authorized in the Defense Authorization conference report for military construction projects, and is \$1.2 billion less than the amount provided last year. Given the funding constraints under which we are operating, we are pleased with the priorities reflected in this bill. Still, Senators should be aware that we are seriously underfunding our defense infrastructure needs, and have been for years. The construction budget was cut in anticipation of savings from defense base closures, and those savings have been much less than anticipated.

As frugal as this budget is, the Administration wanted to spend \$850 million less. Some Senators have assumed from this fact

(See other side)

YEAS (92)				NAYS (6)		NOT VOTING (2)	
Republican (49 or 96%)		Democrats (43 or 91%)		Republicans (2 or 4%)	Democrats (4 or 9%)	Republicans (2)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Helms	Akaka	Johnston	Brown	Bradley	Hatfield- ^{2AY}	
Ashcroft	Hutchison	Baucus	Kennedy	McCain	Glenn	Murkowski- ²	
Bennett	Inhofe	Biden	Kerrey		Harkin		
Bond	Jeffords	Bingaman	Kohl		Kerry		
Burns	Kassebaum	Boxer	Lautenberg				
Campbell	Kempthorne	Breaux	Leahy				
Chafee	Kyl	Bryan	Levin				
Coats	Lott	Bumpers	Lieberman				
Cochran	Lugar	Byrd	Mikulski				
Cohen	Mack	Conrad	Moseley-Braun				
Coverdell	McConnell	Daschle	Moynihan				
Craig	Nickles	Dodd	Murray				
D'Amato	Pressler	Dorgan	Nunn				
DeWine	Roth	Exon	Pell				
Domenici	Santorum	Feingold	Pryor				
Faircloth	Shelby	Feinstein	Reid				
Frahm	Simpson	Ford	Robb				
Frist	Smith	Graham	Rockefeller				
Gorton	Snowe	Heflin	Sarbanes				
Gramm	Specter	Hollings	Simon				
Grams	Stevens	Inouye	Wellstone				
Grassley	Thomas		Wyden				
Gregg	Thompson						
Hatch	Thurmond						
	Warner						

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

that the \$850 million that this bill will provide for additional construction projects is wasteful because President Clinton did not favor them. We emphatically disagree. The additional funding will go for projects that meet merit criteria that were developed by those Senators who consistently have criticized Congress for exercising its judgment in this area. A large portion of the funding will go for military family housing, which all Senators are aware is in serious disrepair and would be condemned if it were in private hands, and another large portion would go for projects for the Guards and Reserves. It is this second area that has been most heavily criticized. That criticism is unjustified. Congress had to add that spending because the Clinton Administration was derelict in its request. For instance, it suggested a 95-percent cut in funding for Army Guard and Reserve construction projects. This suggestion was absurd and irresponsible. Our Armed Forces have been reduced tremendously in the past few years at the same time as their use has increased tremendously. These two dynamics have greatly increased the importance and the use of the National Guard and Reserves, and have consequently increased their construction needs. President Clinton clearly understood that making this request would force Congress to add funding. This problem did not start with President Clinton. Previous Administrations, both Republican and Democratic, have refused to request adequate funding for Guard and Reserve projects. Despite repeated prodding from Congress, the attitude has been that Congress will take care of it. This attitude largely comes from the Defense Department when it prepares the Administration's defense budget request. This year we have added specific report language requiring the Army to select Guard and Reserve projects for funding. We have been told that certain Army officers intend to ignore that language. Those officers should be aware that ignoring Congress' express intent in report language may result in explicit, more exacting requirements that they must obey and may find more onerous.

This bill will provide \$850 million more than the inadequate request made by the Clinton Administration for military construction, but it still will not provide enough. Unfortunately, it all that we can afford to provide. Overall, we are pleased with the manner in which this bill will allocate scarce resources, and thus urge the adoption of the conference report.

Those opposing passage contended:

This conference report contains \$850 million in unrequested funding for military construction projects. Of that amount, 13 States will get more than \$20 million each, with 6 States receiving more than \$30 million, 3 of those States receiving more than \$40 million, and one of them receiving a whopping \$55 million. With our enormous debt, declining military budgets, and so many urgent defense needs going unmet, it is completely unacceptable to spend nearly \$1 billion on unrequested construction projects in a few select States. Every year Congress does the same thing. The practice should stop. This Congress, which has otherwise had an admirable record in cutting wasteful spending and in fighting for funding for defense needs, has failed in this one area. In protest, we urge the rejection of this conference report.